Although I disagree with the calculus that embryos should be discarded rather than used in research, I recognize and appreciate these deeply felt objections. In fact, I took the lead on creating an embryo adoption awareness campaign in fiscal year 2002, and continue to include $2 million for that campaign in the HHS appropriation. If these embryos are likely to be donated to families that cannot conceive, I want this to be the first choice. However, with 400,000 frozen embryos in IVF clinics around the country, the supply far exceeds the demand and embryos are being discarded. Nonetheless, I want to pursue this and other options to address the objections of some of my colleagues.

When the President's Council on Bioethics reported on several theoretical methods for deriving stem cells without destroying embryos, I immediately scheduled a hearing to investigate these ideas. On July 12, 2005, the Labor-HHS Subcommittee heard testimony from five witnesses describing several theoretical techniques for deriving stem cells without destroying embryos. All five witnesses supported moving forward with the alternative methods without abandoning embryonic stem cell research. The alternative stem cells would theoretically also have the key ability to become any type of cell. Let me briefly mention several of the techniques discussed at the hearing.

Dr. Robert Lanza of Advanced Cell Technologies claims to have derived stem cells from a single cell extracted from 2-day-old, eight-celled mouse embryos. This single cell is called a blastomere and its removal from human embryos does not destroy the original embryo. Scientists know a single cell can be taken from a 2-day-old embryo without destroying it, because it is routinely done in pre-implantation genetic diagnosis.

Dr. William Hurlbut, a Stanford University bioethicist, supports a technique where a cloned embryo would be created whose DNA is mutated such that it cannot develop into a baby. This altered embryo would be destroyed for its stem cells. Since the embryo never had the potential to produce a baby, some of the objections normally raised with embryonic stem cell research would be circumvented.

Several scientists have suggested deriving stem cells from technically dead embryos. When embryos frozen during in-vitro fertilization are thawed, some never resume dividing and thus are discarded.

Many scientists are attempting to turn back the clock on older cells so they again become ''pluripotent,'' the scientific term for the ability to turn into any tissue. Scientists already are trying to do this to some degree through ''adult stem cell'' research, such as turning blood-making cells into cells that produce liver or muscle tissues.

The legislation, which Senator SANTORUM and I have drafted, is meant to encourage these alternative methods for deriving stem cells without harming human embryos. The act amends the Public Health Service Act by inserting a section that:

(1) Mandates that the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall support meritorious peer-reviewed research to develop techniques for the derivation of stem cells without creating or destroying human embryos.

(2) Requires the Secretary to issue guidelines within 90 days to implement this research and to identify and prioritize the next research steps.

(3) Requires the Secretary to consider techniques outlined by the President's Council on Bioethics, such as altered nuclear transfer and single cell derivation.

(4) Requires the Secretary to report yearly on the activities carried out under this authorization.

(5) Includes a ''Rule of Construction'' stating: ''Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect any policy, guideline, or regulation regarding embryonic stem cell research, human cloning by somatic cell nuclear transfer, or any other research not specifically authorized by this section.''

(6) Defines ''human embryo'' by reference to the latest definition contained in the appropriations act for the Department of Health and Human Services.

(7) Authorizes ''such sums as may be necessary'' for fiscal years 2007 through 2009.

Knowing that scientists never know exactly which research will lead to the next great cure, I have always supported opening as many avenues of research as possible. Based on that line of reasoning, I have always supported human embryonic, adult, and cord blood stem cell research. My goal is to see cures for the various afflictions that lower the quality of life—or end the lives—of Americans.

The Santorum/Specter bill focuses attention on one of those avenues of research. I must emphasize that this bill is not a substitute for support of human embryonic stem cell research or support for H.R. 810. The two bills are complementary in their scope and together will advance our understanding of biomedical science and bring us another step closer to the cures and treatment that we all desire.

MONTANA'S NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the 1–163rd infantry battalion of Montana's National Guard for their continued contribution to our Nation. In peacetime, these soldiers have performed admirably at home in Montana, but in wartime the members of the first of the 163rd infantry battalion truly deserve recognition.

For 18 months, they were deployed to Iraq where, on a daily basis, they risked their lives to defend our Nation's core beliefs—freedom, justice, and equality. In November of 2005, 700 troops returned home to Montana.

While serving abroad, these men and women spent the majority of their time at 3 forward operating bases in northern Iraq. They bravely undermined insurgency in the largest and most dangerous area in the 116th Brigade's area of operations.

These Montanans risked their lives daily during their field operations. In total, the 1–163rd infantry battalion performed 6,400 patrols where they encountered frequent attacks. During their deployment, the 1–163rd engaged in over 35 direct battles with members of the Iraqi insurgency and received small arms fire over 130 times. The battalion also defused almost 200 improvised explosive devices, IEDs, and experienced 359 IED detonations.

In addition to the routine patrols that the unit regularly performed, the battalion also conduced 35 task force level operations, 10 joint task force air assault missions, and 120 deliberate company-level operations.

Despite the dangerous conditions, the 1–163rd infantry battalion still made considerable advances in neutralizing their area of operations. The battalion was able to reduce the number of arms and insurgents in the area. Hundreds of Iraqi weapon systems were confiscated, including AK–47s, rocket propelled grenades and mortar tubes, and over 100 insurgents were detained. These efforts were critical in minimizing the likelihood of future attacks in the area.

Not only did the 1–163rd improve the overall safety of northern Iraq, but this infantry battalion also participated in the extensive reconstruction effort. In total, 68 projects worth $7.5 million were successfully implemented by the battalion. Countless improvements to municipalities in northern Iraq are directly attributable to the 1–163rd.

Today I wish to especially commend two members of the 1–163rd who did not return home but instead gave their lives in service to this great Nation. SGT Travis Arndt, 23, from Great Falls, MT, was killed in action near Kirkuk, Iraq, on September 21, 2005. MSG Robbie McNary, 42, died in combat in Hawijah, Iraq, on March 31, 2005, leaving behind his wife and three children in Lewistown, MT. Let us remember them for their honorable service and ultimate sacrifice.

As a Montanan, an American, and a Senator, I would like to truly thank and commend the first of the 163rd infantry battalion of the Montana's National Guard for their excellent performance during this last deployment and their impressive dedication and loyalty to this nation.

In November, when the 1–163rd returned to Montana from their 18-month deployment, they were applauded for their success, but I would like to keep that recognition alive. Long after this war on terror is over, we will remember their contribution to our most valuable freedom and security. Thank you.